



REGENERIS

Economic Strategy Framework for Sefton

A Draft Report by Regeneris Consulting
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sefton needs to set itself an ambitious set of goals for change. The borough has untapped economic potential and intends to take full advantage of the opportunities within its reach. Sefton's residents and businesses can clearly generate wealth and succeed in the modern economy.
- 1.2 However, the proceeds and opportunities of growth are not evenly shared. Sefton has a prosperous middle, a comfortable but ageing North and real challenges in the South. It is time to take stock and to set out a bold plan for economic growth across Sefton. This must re-engage communities left behind by economic change and ensure there are real local benefits in pursuing growth.
- 1.3 This is the first draft of the framework for a new economic strategy for Sefton. Its purpose is to:
 - Identify the key economic and social challenges which should be the focus of the strategy.
 - Set the headline economic growth objective and the framework for action.
 - Outline the action areas that will guide delivery of the strategy, reflecting current, planned and new priority actions.
- 1.4 The challenges and opportunities outlined within this Framework underlines the importance of working in partnership with the Liverpool City Region, the private sector and alongside the community and stakeholders, to deliver the growth and improvements Sefton deserves. Sefton Council will actively use its role and assets to facilitate and enable growth but it will take the commitment and input from all stakeholders to create a new vibrant economy for Sefton.



2 The Opportunities for Sefton

The Big Picture

- 2.1 Sefton has assets in its **people, places, businesses and connectivity** to deliver economic growth which makes a real difference to the lives of its residents and communities. To achieve this, it must tackle historic economic weaknesses, make the most of its greater qualities, and ensure its businesses and workforce is resilient in the face of continuing economic, social and environmental change.
- 2.2 Despite a challenging economic back-drop over the last few years and an underlying pattern of under-performance, **new commercial investments** are being made into Sefton. There is strong interest from the market to do more at sites along the Dunnings Bridge Road corridor including Atlantic Park and Chancerygate. There is the potential for significant new commercial development around the Port and links to Port related trade, and scope to expand commercial activity at other key employment sites in the borough including Southport Business Park, where the transatlantic internet cable is received. The key will be to ensure that Sefton has the supply of sites for future commercial development that provide the scale, quality and location that give it the flexibility to respond to the needs of changing markets.
- 2.3 However, the borough remains what many would consider, too **over-reliant on lower paid sectors**. The visitor economy is a pillar of Sefton's economy and continues to be a priority sector across Merseyside, but it tends to offer relatively lower paid and seasonal employment. Whilst austerity has seen reductions in funding and employment in the public sector, (HMRC recently announced closure of all Bootle offices by 2020/21), central government functions based in Bootle, the local authority and the health/care sectors remain key employers. Some employment in these sectors are higher skilled and higher paid, but the majority of employment is lower value.
- 2.4 Securing more representation of higher value sectors, and better paid jobs for Sefton's residents, are central to tackling the borough's **productivity challenge**. Only 9% of Sefton's workers are employed in so-called knowledge intensive industries compared with 13% in the LCR and 15% in England. The rate at which the borough creates and sustains new businesses is lagging against comparable areas elsewhere, and larger businesses are significantly under-represented.
- 2.5 In many respects, Sefton is an attractive place to live with some high-quality towns and villages, an outstanding coastline and good connections to major employment centres in Liverpool and Manchester. These are strengths which have helped it to attract and retain



higher income households, entrepreneurs and middle class suburban populations working in Liverpool, the borough and beyond. However, this also underlines the contrast between more prosperous people and places, and those communities locked into a low-income local service economy, and those excluded from the benefits of growth.

- 2.6 There are **well-established regeneration priorities** for Sefton's places. **Southport has historically been the focus of significant amounts of public investment and**, like many coastal towns, continues to strengthen its destination appeal, by securing new investment that will regenerate and bring new attractions and spending to the resort. **Bootle, has also been the recipient of regeneration investment** yet more is needed, in order to place the area on a more prosperous and thriving footing. Delivery of major new regeneration in North Liverpool, opportunities that are arising out of the Port and ambitious plans for the town's retail and leisure core, provide the platform for change in Bootle. The retail and leisure core of **Crosby** village demands to be revitalised, with significant developer-led interest in this location. The desire to improve access to **Sefton's coast** and offer more to visitors and residents is recognised, balanced with the need for environmental protection and conservation.
- 2.7 Sefton has tried to tackle its **relative decline and underperformance** over the last 40 years during times where much more public investment was available to regenerate communities and stimulate growth. Although, some significant successes have been achieved by a range of interventions and programmes, there remains a **growing gap with other parts of the country**.
- 2.8 Too many households in Sefton have lived with **deprivation, mental health, poverty, low household incomes and other health-related challenges** for too long. Whilst many of the borough's children get a good start in primary schools, both secondary schools and colleges do not yet prepare enough young people, to get the skills, ambition and know-how they need to succeed in the changing economic landscape.
- 2.9 Beyond Sefton and the LCR, the **UK's decision to leave the European Union** brings new challenges as well as opportunities and uncertainty for the borough's businesses, workforce and communities. Understanding what leaving the EU and the Single Market means for the country, the city region and for Sefton is crucial. Although it is too soon to determine precisely what the downside and upside impacts are likely to be, the key challenges for Sefton will be to anticipate and be prepared for change, and be flexible enough to adapt to the change that might follow. Clearly, the recent investment into Liverpool Port at Seaforth in Sefton sees the major site of national infrastructure prepared to embrace new transatlantic and Far East freight demands.



Key Challenges

2.9.1 Sefton's Economic Assessment (June 2017) has highlighted seven specific economic challenges for the borough:

1: Delivery of new housing & employment development, essential for growth and regeneration

2.10 The emphasis in the economic strategy framework must be on the delivery of land for housing and commercial development. The challenge is to translate the Local Plan's allocations, including sites owned and controlled by Sefton Council, into developments which provide the mix of housing and commercial premises that meets the needs of residents and businesses.

2.11 New housing will help to underpin regeneration in Sefton's towns, bringing new residents, spending and demand for services that will support their sustainability. Both new housing and commercial development will help to increase revenues through Council Tax, New Homes Bonus and new Business Rate income. The Local Plan identifies the need to provide 11,520 new homes in the borough over the next 15 years. This will require significant construction investment, creating a large number of construction jobs. Where possible, Sefton needs to capture the benefit of this activity for local people and companies through targeted initiatives to promote the inclusion of local residents in employment and relevant training opportunities and enable local companies to secure additional contracted activity as a result of these developments.

2.12 The key challenges for commercial development revolve around the scale, quality and location of employment sites in Sefton to meet future demand. Market preferences change over time and the borough must ensure it has enough flexibility and choice in its supply both to respond and to be anticipating this change in the longer term. The past few years have seen some significant changes in commercial development activity. Internet trade and direct customer delivery has seen substantial growth in the demand for logistics and distribution space. Demand for high spec office space has recovered but is unlikely to return to the levels that saw speculative development and large scale publicly backed schemes in the 2000s. There is also an undersupply of incubator/start up space, particularly for high value new businesses in the digital and creative sector. Modern manufacturing is also seeing a growing need for older stock and sites to be upgraded or replaced.

2.13 Ongoing work to identify the scale of employment land needed to support the growth of port-related activity, points to a very substantial need across the Liverpool City Region and Sefton, needs to determine how it best contributes to this, as well as to the wider



opportunities that stem from development at and around Liverpool 2 itself.

2: Need to make much more of Sefton's qualities as a place to live, work, invest in and visit

- 2.14 Significant parts of Sefton have a very good reputation as attractive places to live, visit and invest in, enhanced by good connectivity to Liverpool. The challenge for the borough is to make more of these qualities. Attracting new residents to move to the borough will help to generate additional spending potential in Sefton's retail and leisure businesses, reinforcing place-making investment.

3: The need for more, better paid, higher quality jobs in Sefton

- 2.15 Creating new jobs in Sefton is a primary objective for the Economic Strategy Framework. The borough's large resident labour force and its accessibility to people and businesses in the wider area, point to both a need and the capacity for employment growth. The emphasis must also be on the growth of *higher quality and better paid jobs*.
- 2.16 Generating better paid and higher quality local employment as part of activity to bring more jobs to the borough will deliver wider social benefits for Sefton's resident communities reflecting the strong links between decent work, income and well-being.
- 2.17 The recent rise of precarious employment is both a key barrier to people's engagement in Sefton's economy and an important contributory factor in the health and well-being challenges faced by some residents. Progressive action which enables more of Sefton's residents to compete for and secure better paid work must be an integral part of the economic strategy framework.

4: Investment in education and skills is key to delivering growth that benefits residents

- 2.18 The changing economic and employment landscape, education, skills and the impacts that they have on employability are key factors linking people to work in Sefton. Investing in education and skills is critical to the start that Sefton's residents have to their working lives, to their progression in work and to their ability to change direction or re-enter work in later years.
- 2.19 This challenge points to the need for action which links learning, employability and employers in Sefton, and which provides broader support extending both to the individual and families to enable more residents to enter and progress in work. Young people need the employability skills to ensure they are ready for work and to help them make the right choices about the academic and vocational pathways in front of them. Adults who are vulnerable or who suffer with ill health need access to high quality, accessible



interventions that are both person-centred and able to respond to the changing needs of the employment market.

5: Targeted investment in transport infrastructure & services to support growth

- 2.20 High quality infrastructure (transport, utilities, digital) is an enabler of growth and an important factor in what makes Sefton a good place to live, work and run a business. Securing new investment in Sefton's infrastructure, and commitments to improving transport services, should therefore be priority areas for action in the borough's economic strategy.

6: Need to improve digital infrastructure and ensure more residents and businesses benefit from it

- 2.21 Rapid change and growth in digital technology and services present both challenges and opportunities to Sefton's economy. Simply keeping up with a fast expanding market is a challenge but the borough needs to think 20 years ahead if its residents and businesses are to be successful in an age of digital services and automation. The digital economy will be a driver of economic growth and an enabler for the engagement of individuals and communities in the local economy.

7: Tackling health & well-being must be integral to growth strategy

- 2.22 The health and well-being of Sefton's residents are tightly bound into the area's economy. Whilst the borough ranks as one of the happiest areas of Merseyside, there are some significant and entrenched challenges in which economic factors are both a contributory cause and a potential solution.
- 2.23 Data indicates that too many people in Sefton continue to be disconnected from work and disengaged from economic growth. Large and growing numbers of Sefton's working age population claim sickness related benefits. Thousands of families exist without work and too many people are unemployed or in precarious work that does not give them sufficient earnings to enable their financial independence. The poverty this generates compounds and drives poor health, lower levels of life expectancy and sustains ongoing patterns of deprivation.
- 2.24 Sefton Council and its partners recognise the strong but complex connection between health, well-being and the economy. The connectivity between health and employment and skills underpins much collaboration and there is potential for more to be achieved. The absolute importance of the health and social care sector in terms of its size and skills requirements is also recognised. Concerted action to address the health issues faced by some residents will better enable them to access the opportunities brought by new jobs



and investment, and help ensure that the benefits of growth are experienced more widely across Sefton's communities.

- 2.25 The ability of some residents to create and take advantage of the opportunities around them is limited by mental health issues and this is increasing in prevalence. They are significant barriers to people securing work, as well as a challenge for people in work, particularly those in low paid and lower skilled occupations. The Council and its partners recognise that young people are at risk of suffering mental ill health and support a range of relevant interventions.



3 Strategic Objective and Focus

Inclusive Growth

- 3.1 Inclusive growth is the core objective of Sefton’s new Economic Strategy Framework. The established cornerstones of an economic growth strategy – delivering new development, creating new jobs and businesses, supporting Sefton’s established businesses to grow, and securing significant new inward investment - are all essential to increasing the borough’s prosperity. Sefton must be receptive and encouraging to private, public and social enterprise, and it must create the conditions for it to be successful.
- 3.2 However, the new Framework must set a direction for action so that the impacts of economic growth reach many more of Sefton’s residents. It must also better enable people to see that they are contributing to growth. This means:
- A drive for higher pay and higher productivity business and jobs in the borough, balanced with the priority given to generating more jobs.
 - More residents with the aspiration, opportunity and support to succeed in a changing economy
 - A more connected and accessible system of local support for residents of all ages to enter or re-enter the labour market after being excluded from it and prosper in employment or entrepreneurship
 - Different and new ways of connecting Sefton’s economic, social and physical infrastructure.
 - Creative and practical approaches to delivering new private and public investment in a tough financial climate.
- 3.3 The concept of inclusive growth is not a new one, but it has become much more prominent in the aftermath of the UK recession. Flat productivity growth, static or falling real incomes and continuing economic inequality have focused renewed attention on how the benefits of economic growth are distributed. With it, there is also renewed focus on how exclusion limits the potential for people and places to flourish. Our commitment to Inclusive Growth in Sefton will require us to measure what we value, combining the results of our economic and social impacts.



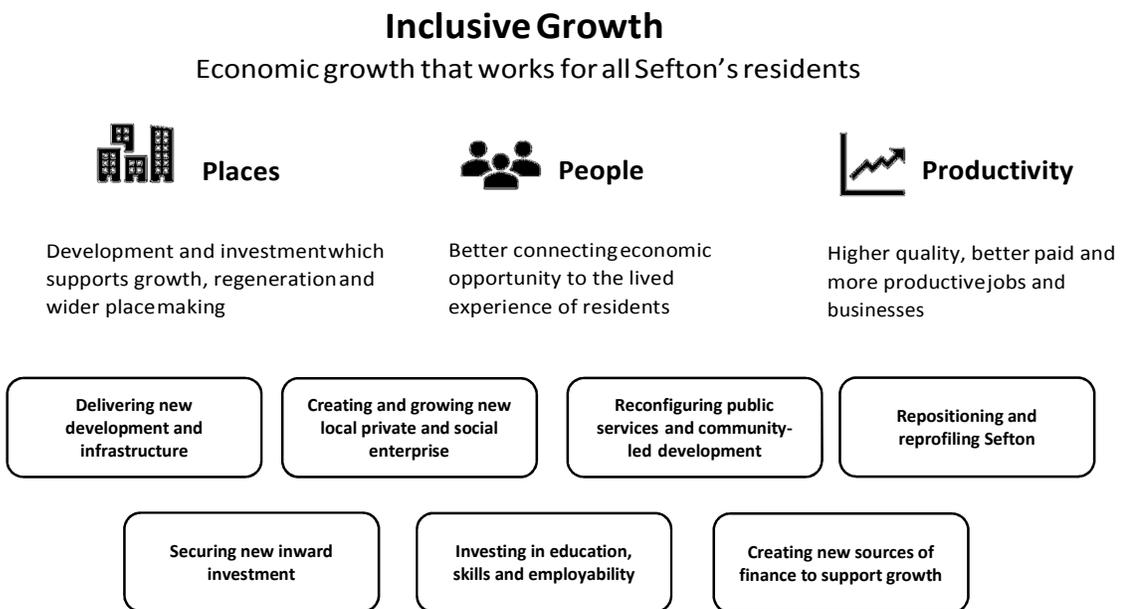
A Framework for Action

3.4 The focus of action revolves around three themes that link the key economic challenges for Sefton to the inclusive growth objective. They are:

- **Places** – giving priority to new housing and commercial development, the regeneration and revitalisation of Sefton’s towns and broader investment in place- making.
- **Productivity** – recognising that the priority of creating more jobs, more businesses and business growth in Sefton should be balanced with action to improve the quality of work and how much it pays.
- **People** – putting Sefton’s residents at the heart of the economic Framework and equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to participate in a tough labour market and make a positive contribution to Sefton’s economy.

3.5 Seven broad action areas follow from this, summarised in the diagram below.

Figure 1.1 Framework for Action



4 Priority Action Areas

4.1 This part of the Economic Strategy Framework sets out the priority action areas that will guide Sefton Council and its partners. It captures:

- Key activity that is already a priority and is being implemented.
- Planned activity which is yet to commence and which should be given priority.
- New lines of action for Sefton Council to consider looking forward.

4.2 A brief description is given for each action, including its main objective. Broad types of priority action are identified, with examples to show what delivery will mean in practice. This is **not** a detailed action plan, which will be developed by Sefton Council as it adopts its new Economic Strategy Framework.

Priority Action Areas

1. Delivering new development and infrastructure

4.3 Delivering new development, regenerating Sefton's towns and providing new, modern infrastructure which supports growth, is crucial to the economic strategy building on the work being undertaken to deliver the aspirations and ambitions outlined in the town centre Investment and Development Frameworks.

4.4 Sefton's newly adopted Local Plan targets the delivery of 11,520 new homes between 2012 and 2030, together with 82 hectares of employment and the infrastructure (transport, utilities, broadband) to support growth. This provides the platform for housing, commercial and other forms of development to drive economic growth and be a catalyst for change in Sefton.

Objective

4.5 The goal is to secure the delivery of new development in Sefton which supports the growth of its population, the creation of new employment and the delivery of major regeneration.

Priority Action Focus

4.6 **Delivering new employment sites and premises, improving the existing stock and ensuring choice:** This centres on the way that Sefton Council works with its own land and



assets and with private land/owners and developers to secure development on new and existing employment sites. Actions to achieve this priority should include the approach to public and private investment, in site preparation and infrastructure, development agreements and the securing of developers and occupiers.

- 4.7 Dunnings Bridge Road will be one focus of action, guided by the Economic Investment Strategy for this key employment corridor. This will centre on the delivery of new and upgraded premises on established sites (e.g. Atlantic Park, Chancery Gate) and new sites (e.g. employment land at Maghull East) supported by continued inward investment promotion. Responding to current high levels of demand for medium and large sized logistics sites across the City Region, with Dunnings Bridge Road a target location for operators, will be a key challenge. Beyond the delivering of its Local Plan allocated land for employment, Sefton Council needs to be considering now what steps to take to provide the long-term pipeline of sites that will enable it to make the most of changing demands from employers and developers, and to new opportunities to capture inward and growth investment that will inevitably emerge and which could not have been foreseen by its Local Plan.
- 4.8 **Capturing the benefits of Port-related trade:** Expanding trade linked to Liverpool 2 is likely to generate need for new sites and premises adjacent to the port estate around Seaforth and on the western side of Bootle, as well as creating opportunities for new investment linked to the handling and distribution of freight by road and rail.
- 4.9 Capturing new business serving the port will require premises and potentially sites to accommodate this growth in an area in which there is already a broad mix of established employment uses. Sefton Council will need to work with Peel Ports, and take due account of the Highways England proposals for a major port access improvement, to manage these demands so that they maximise the business and employment benefits to the borough whilst mitigating any adverse environmental and community impacts.
- 4.10 **Regenerating and redeveloping Bootle:** Capitalising on the Strand acquisition and the Council's land and premises in Bootle transforming the town by improving and expanding its town centre leisure offer, increasing and widening its market and affordable housing supply to bring more residents to central Bootle, and by capitalising on its role as an employment centre by modernising, upgrading or converting its large stock of offices.
- 4.11 Sefton Council and its partners should push opportunities to deliver new and innovative housing and other development which encourages people to think differently about the town. An initiative such as Depot Two Zero (new modern start up space in Merton House, Bootle) is a good example of repurposing town centre sites in ways which could generate new business and economic activity locally. Sites such as the Coffee House Bridge and emerging ideas for canal-side development present exciting opportunities for



development.

- 4.12 The town already benefits from a wide boulevard/grid layout, and improvements to its accessibility to town centre users and as a gateway to Liverpool by both car and public transport should be an integral part of its regeneration.
- 4.13 **Delivering new investment and regeneration in Southport:** Securing new investment in the resort’s heritage, adding to the critical mass of year round visitor attractions and retaining a strong events programme are key. This includes investment in historic Lord Street, leisure, business conferencing and in Southport’s beachfront offer. In respect to employment sites/premises, bringing forward new opportunities at Southport Business Park should be a priority and seek to capitalise on the unique ultrafast connectivity offered by the GTT connection located here. Southport’s Development Framework provides a clear picture of investment priorities, including improvements to Lord Street, extending the family leisure offer on the beachfront, raising the quality of accommodation and improving its food, drink and niche retail offer.
- 4.14 The aim is to strengthen Southport as a visitor destination by broadening its offer and raising the quality on the range of facilities and activities it delivers for visitors, including its major events programmes and the potential to generate more conference trade. The town’s role as a key employment centre in the north of the borough points to action that expands its supply of business premises and provides business support to enable new businesses to start and take off in the town.
- 4.15 **Regenerating Crosby Village:** Delivery of new retail, leisure and targeted housing development in and around Crosby Village, alongside investment to improve accessibility to the village centre. Opportunities should be pursued on key sites to bring new retail and leisure occupiers into the village centre as part of the wider strategy to increase footfall. The Council and its partners would also invest in public realm and other environmental improvements to the village centre.
- 4.16 **Coastal gateways:** New investment in visitor infrastructure at key access points to the borough’s outstanding coastline is required. Actions are needed which enable Sefton to offer visitors more incentives to spend time and money in the area, balanced by the need to protect the environmental quality of the coastline. The key locations include Crosby Lakeside and Another Place, Crosby Coastguard Station/Hall Road, Formby Point, Ainsdale-on-Sea and sites on Southport’s beach front.
- 4.17 **Deliver key strategic transport investments:** Sefton has an established transport investment programme and this will be its focus for action over the next few years. The key schemes include Maghull North Station, further dualling of the A565, improvements at Junction 1 of the M58 and the A59 through Maghull and Aintree and



the A570 south eastern approaches. The delivery of new employment development on the Dunnings Bridge Road corridor will also require investment to improve traffic flows, reduce congestion and respond to the expansion of port-related traffic.

- 4.18 The borough should work with Merseytravel to ensure that investment in Merseyrail's rolling stock results in improvements on lines that serve Sefton, together with continual monitoring and any improvements to bus services to ensure they respond to new housing and commercial development.
- 4.19 Beyond targeted investment within the borough, Sefton Council will need to work with rail franchise operators and Network Rail to deliver long-term improvements to services connecting Sefton's towns with locations to the east including Manchester and Preston, and to the national rail network. Continued dialogue with Peel Ports about port-side rail infrastructure and with the City Region, central Government and Network Rail about rail freight capacity on the Bootle Branch line, the west coast mainline and Trans Pennine routes will be important if the potential to move freight into and out of Liverpool 2 by rail is to be realised.
- 4.20 **Digital:** business parks and the centre of Bootle should be targets for accelerated roll-out of ultrafast broadband to help local businesses trade and innovate and to provide a set of hotspot destinations for digital investment. Bootle could be developed as digital test bed for social initiatives and business innovation.
- 4.21 Wi-Fi for public areas in Southport and Bootle could help attract a new generation of residents, visitors and shoppers drawn to attend and participate in events, networking and community development
- 4.22 Sefton should also be looking to secure Full Fibre networks and Ultrafast Broadband building on the investment that has resulted in 99% of the borough having access to Superfast Broadband
- 4.23 Investment in digital infrastructure should be complemented with programmes targeting schools and training provision to equip people with digital skills to promote digital inclusion.
- 4.24 **Delivery of high quality supporting infrastructure:** This is crucial to new housing and commercial development. Sefton Council should work with developers and infrastructure providers (e.g. utilities) to ensure that development sites and existing commercial premises secure the best possible provision of power and other vital services.



How does this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 4.25 New housing, commercial development and wider regeneration will generate new employment, new businesses and business growth in Sefton. It will have direct impacts, through jobs created in the preparation and construction of new development, and through their end uses as businesses and organisations occupy new commercial and other premises across the borough.
- 4.26 The opportunity for Sefton is to maximise social value opportunities by working with developers, occupiers and organisations in the public sector to link employment opportunities to Sefton's residents. Although it is a more difficult task, finding ways to encourage and support employers to deliver better paid and full-time work should also be a priority. Over time, targeted investment marketing in sectors which deliver higher/middle-level skilled employment should also be part of the strategy.
- 4.27 The action area will also have an extensive range of indirect impacts on inclusive growth. Both businesses operating in Sefton and public sector employers spend money on goods and services to support their activity. Some of this expenditure is already retained within the borough, but there is substantial scope to work with these companies and organisations to better enable businesses in Sefton, including new businesses, to compete for and secure supply chain contracts.
- 4.28 In its own right, transport and other infrastructure investment will generate economic benefits by unlocking investment, reducing costs to businesses and better enabling people to access employment. Collaboration between local stakeholders will focus on how employment opportunities generated from these investments can be captured and targeted towards local people who will benefit from these opportunities. High quality infrastructure will make Sefton more attractive to investors and to people considering moving to the area, both of which are important to the wider economic benefits of this type of investment. Giving the borough an edge in ultrafast broadband and digital skills to go with it will enable it to compete in an economy which will be increasingly driven by technology.
- 4.29 Finally, new housing and commercial development will contribute to increasing land values and the commercial returns from investing in Sefton. Whilst this effect must be balanced against the need to remain cost competitive and to safeguard the supply of more affordable housing, the upsides are positive signals to the development market as well as the potential to generate more revenue in the form of increased Council Tax receipts from new housing and higher business rate income.



Delivery Tactics

4.30 Sefton Council and its partners already recognise that working with private sector investors and developers, alongside public sector funding bodies, is essential to achieving its development and regeneration objectives. To make the most of new investment for the borough, the following should be at the core of the way that Sefton Council approaches delivery:

- Following through on regeneration and investment strategies for Bootle, Crosby, Southport and the coastal area so that they guide development over the next 10 years.
- Engaging early with preferred developers on specific development sites, particularly those owned by the Council and key strategic sites.
- Ensuring that the planning system operates as efficiently and positively as possible to minimise delays and reduce barriers to development.
- Working with developers, businesses and public sector organisations operating in Sefton to create opportunities for Sefton’s businesses (private and social enterprises) to secure contracts to supply developments and end users, building further on Invest Sefton activities.
- Connecting activity which provides training and support to the borough’s residents to employer recruitment, building further on Sefton@Work activities.
- Providing opportunities for residents to update their skills to rejoin the workforce through Sefton Adult Learning Service.
- Developing the case for strategic infrastructure funding targeting Sefton’s main infrastructure priorities.
- Ensuring that local training providers and FE Colleges receive timely intelligence about investments.
- Strategically expanding Sefton Council’s asset base and using its land and property holdings to pursue development objectives. This includes establishing investment vehicles for new housing and commercial development and developing the case for Extra Care housing for older people in Sefton, which would provide them with independent living accommodation, but also with on- site care services available.

2: Creating and Growing Local, Private and Social Enterprise

4.31 Sefton needs to increase the size of its business base to enable the business tax base to grow and to spread the benefits to residents through the creation of more jobs which they



have the requisite skills to access. Sefton has 50 businesses per 1,000 working age residents, which is considerably lower than the England average of 68. Sefton's reliance on public sector employment (24%) has left the borough exposed to austerity measures and private sector employment growth has not been able to compensate for the shrinkage in the public sector. Business start-up rates are low, generating 69 new businesses per 1,000 population which is significantly below the national average of 94.

- 4.32 We need to develop resilience to economic change through providing strong economic foundations for growth and a diverse business base. Substantial investment in major projects and infrastructure such as SuperPort and Atlantic Gateway will support the diversification of Sefton's economy, alongside support for key opportunity sectors such as Business and Professional Services, Construction and Low Carbon, Digital and Creative, Manufacturing, Port and Maritime the Visitor Economy, including Arts and Culture and potential Rural economy activities.
- 4.33 As public sector reforms reduce the breadth of services on offer, there is a potential role for the Third Sector to step into the breach and diversify and, where appropriate, commercialise their current offer. However, there needs to be a refreshed approach to partnership with Sefton's social enterprise base to identify where opportunities may exist, and a supportive environment to fully realise this potential.

Objective

- 4.34 Sefton needs to grow the business base through creating and growing new private and social enterprise. It must embrace growth and ambition across the business base, and provide more focused intervention to realise potential where it is considered greatest, which may include key opportunity sectors and target geographies.

4.35 Priority Actions

Sefton needs to facilitate the achievement of this objective through:

- Ensuring Sefton is well positioned to maximise the benefits from emerging Liverpool City Region proposals for a Single Investment Agency, Local Growth Hubs and post December 2018 European Structural Investment Funding.
- Aligning business growth and investment activities with the key regeneration programmes in Sefton's Framework for Change.
- Ensuring Sefton maximises the benefit of planned future UK Government, European/Post Brexit business growth, enterprise support and investment



programmes

- Ensuring business growth, enterprise support and investment activities and plans fit with Sefton (Vision 2030), National (UK Industrial strategy), City Region (LCR Growth Strategy); European Structural Investment Fund strategies.
- Ensuring the physical infrastructure to support start-up activity is in place, including serviced workspace, incubation space and associated support and facilitation.
- Opportunities to deliver a sector specific offer aligned to key opportunity sectors should be considered, for example, Southport Business Park and activity across the town could provide an opportunity to incubate and grow new digital businesses and digitise the business community in that area through an offer combining innovative office and work space with business support providing specialist advice on innovation, growth, funding and finance.
- Focusing on building up Sefton's start-up rates through a tiered business support offer, which includes lower intensity provision available universally to all business types and higher intensity provision targeting key opportunity sectors and scalable companies which have the greatest potential for growth. As part of this, action to maintain and further develop a single point of contact and frontline support framework should be a priority.
- Promoting a cultural change in attitude to enterprise, innovation and leadership which starts in school and which inspires and enthuses young people to be ambitious and optimistic about the future. This requires effective engagement by employers in delivering career inspiration activity to include: mentoring, visits, talks and work experience and for the education system to embed this offer into the curriculum and ensure careers advice and guidance is impartial. The Council has a (statutory) role to play in this agenda through securing impartial advice and guidance for young people who are not in employment and education (NEET) and Sefton seeks to ensure this service provision contributes to our Inclusive Growth agenda
- Facilitating peer learning through encouraging Sefton businesses to participate in benchmarking and best practice visits. This action recognises the good practice delivered by key industry sector programmes such as LCR 4.0, Onsite Insight (Manufacturing), LCR Activate (Digital & Creative) , Interreg Europe (HELIUM-Health & Life Sciences)
- Improve and increase communication with a wider cross-section of businesses, and provide a coordinated approach to networking with regards to key opportunity



sectors, such as Professional Sefton and Export Sefton aimed at developing collaborative activity, learning and innovation. This action seeks to encourage cross-sector networking and encourage market diversification in the supply chain. This work has also led to the creation of structured networks and innovation exchanges.

- Ensuring Sefton's businesses are fit for the future and aware of the potential opportunities presented by transformative technologies. For example, supporting businesses to identify the transformative power of digital as a cross-cutting theme across all sectors, including marketing and sales, supply chain opportunities, accounting, production processes such as 3D printing. Digital requirements should form a key component of the initial diagnostic undertaken with businesses, and targeted support provided where there is scope to drive innovative activity and productivity gains, particularly in key opportunity sectors and scalable companies.
- Mapping Sefton's social enterprise business base to pinpoint opportunities for growth and develop a support package to help them to grow and access new opportunities, including those presented by public sector reform.
- Supporting growth in new markets and supply chains including support for businesses on the implications of Brexit, and increasing the number of exporting businesses and value of exports in Sefton

Delivery Tactics

- Liverpool City Region seeks to produce a step change in the scale of enterprise and business activity, recognising that a healthy business base with strong business growth is crucial to increasing economic performance and competitiveness. The LCR LEP has made business start-ups and development of an entrepreneurial culture a key priority of the LCR Single Growth Strategy and ESIF Programme (2014-2020) and has developed a new Enterprise Strategy Framework which serves as a platform for future delivery. The Framework establishes key factors such as improving enterprise culture; more new businesses; business survival and growth; and workforce development. These align with Sefton's priority action areas and provide a supportive policy framework to aid delivery. These include:
- The LCR Business Growth Hub has been identified by the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as an exemplar initiative with its focus on local knowledge and delivery structures. The Local Growth Hub supports all businesses, but has a particular focus on the SME market. InvestSefton is the Local Growth Hub Broker in Sefton and provides 'light touch' support to start ups and new businesses including a triage service, initial advice, brokerage, business premises search and



managed referral to the Enterprise Hub. 'One to Many' events for individuals seeking to start their own business are also delivered.

- The LCR Enterprise Hub provides a complementary ERDF start up programme, delivered by a consortium of providers led by TWO (The Women's Organisation) and Liverpool Community College. The programme offers pre-start up and business start-up support to aspiring entrepreneurs. Support is targeted at young people; female entrepreneurs; social enterprises; rural; disadvantaged and under-represented groups.
- InvestSefton is the council's business growth, enterprise support and inward investment service. It leads on and supports economic growth in the borough. It delivers the LCR LEP/Government funded Sefton Growth Hub providing a single point of contact for businesses of all types and sizes. The team includes nationally accredited Business Advisers who provide advice; guidance, brokerage and diagnostic support on areas such as business planning, cashflow forecasting, accessing finance including help with financial applications, as well as providing access to and advice on legislative matters such as business rates, waste, and planning. The team also offers a free business sites and premises search service for businesses seeking to start, grow or locate in Sefton.
- InvestSefton is the city-region strategic lead for the LCR ERDF Business Growth Programme. It also delivers the Sefton element of the Programme which provides eligible SME's, who are disengaged or confused with current business support provision, with the capacity and support they need to grow and prosper. The project serves as a bridge between start-up and more bespoke, intensive or specialist support typically supplied by the private sector and which provides participating SMEs with a dedicated Business Growth Adviser. The Advisers provide diagnostic, business planning and brokerage into other specialist/commercial support
- The LCR Business Growth Hub also serves as a the primary gateway for providing sector support for Sefton businesses ensuring that they are aware of and aligned with City Region wide initiatives such as LCR 4.0, (Manufacturing) LCR Activate (Digital & Creative) as well as national programmes like Innovate UK and the Catapult Network. The Sefton Growth Hub (delivered by InvestSefton), working closely with partners at the LEP, will use existing and proven communications platforms to encourage manufacturing businesses to address productivity challenges as well as exploring new export and trading opportunities post-Brexit.
- InvestSefton provides access to finance support to businesses working closely with banks, and a range of financial institutions including Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF) who provide a wide range of funding to businesses in the Liverpool City



Region and surrounding areas. Funding is available from £500 up to £2 million+ for a variety of business needs including start-ups, expansions, acquisitions and management buy outs/buy ins.

- The New Entrepreneurs Allowance programme which provides financial support and advice to help start or grow a business for people in receipt of certain benefits.
- Sefton Economic Forum is the key network business event for Sefton Council that is held twice a year. The forum provides a platform for engaging businesses on a wide range of economic development topics and opportunities for networking between business owners. The forum also hosts a Growth Hub marketplace where businesses can see what help and support is available across the city region.
- Internationalisation support including InvestSefton's Brexit Group and Sefton Export Network are also key business engagement initiatives. The latter has played a key role in Sefton's input into the LCRs International Business Festival activities.
- Continue building relationships with key business membership organisations such as Liverpool & Sefton Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Southport BID to help align engagement activities in Sefton and ensure the views of businesses are fully represented.

How will this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 4.36 Sefton needs to ensure residents are better connected to job opportunities to facilitate inclusive growth. A focus on educational attainment and a skills and training offer, aligned to key sectors of opportunity and cross cutting themes such as digitisation will support this. Sefton's residents need to be part of the solution, and encouraging a positive attitude to entrepreneurship and developing core attributes such as leadership and management skills and a willingness to engage with and adopt new technologies as a driver of change.
- 4.37 Sefton needs to target geographical areas of need to align resident skills and entrepreneurial appetite with key sectors of opportunity. E.g. Enterprise Hub advice and support, business clinics.
- 4.38 Sefton needs to ensure jobseeking residents are better connected to employment opportunities arising from new business growth in the borough. A focus on dovetailing the employer offer through various LCR and ESF programmes with available business growth support will support this. InvestSefton work closely with Sefton@Work to draw attention to where employment opportunities are being created so they can support businesses with their recruitment needs and maximise the take-up of jobs by Sefton residents



3: Securing new inward investment

4.39 Sefton will endeavour to create more jobs which are higher value and make a more productive contribution to the local economy. Securing new investment (domestic or overseas) is part of the solution, which alongside efforts to create and grow local businesses, will help to increase employment and GVA. Sefton has a compelling proposition to present, linked to key opportunity sectors and major projects. However, the critical ingredient to 'sell' is the availability of quality sites and premises, 'shovel ready', and in the locations where businesses want to be as well as a local pool of skills and talent to tap into. The lack of available supply is a significant barrier to realising the inward investment opportunity.

Objective

4.40 Sefton will secure new inward investment targeting higher productive sectors. As public sector employment has shrunk, private sector employment has failed to make up the shortfall, leading to an overall net decrease in the number of jobs and a decrease in substantive positions capable of offering progression and sustainability in terms of earnings and employment security.

Priority Actions

4.41 Sefton needs to prioritise actions which:

- Ensure Sefton is well positioned to maximise the benefits from emerging Liverpool City Region proposals for a Single Investment Agency , Local Growth Hubs and post December 2018 European Structural Investment Funding. It needs to build on the existing LCR approach to inward investment particularly outbound national and international activities.
- Present a compelling investment proposition, linked to the LCR offer and showcasing the opportunity which exists in Sefton, including Labour Market Intelligence, sites and premises offer, supply chain activity, business support etc.
- Draw investors to spatial opportunities which the area development frameworks and investment strategies in Southport, Dunning's Bridge Road, Bootle Town Centre and Crosby help to support.
- Make it easier to do business in Sefton through a 'business friendly' approach across



the Council's business facing and regulatory services which provide a more professional "front door".

- Embed existing Sefton companies and investors with HQ functions located elsewhere by developing strong relationships, and bespoke solutions to ensure their needs are being met in the borough.
- Provide networking opportunities, working with LCR partners where appropriate, to realise cross-sector and supply chain market potential.
- Maximise local employment opportunities from new investment by encouraging investing businesses to demonstrate social value and corporate social responsibility through the pursuit of direct dialogue focused on local employment, training and supply chain gain.
- Link Place Marketing activities to emerging strategy for Sefton Visitor Economy to provide a diverse range of offers to attract new investment. E.g. Arts & Cultural, Retail, Leisure and Food and Beverage.

Delivery Tactics

4.42 The priority action areas need to align with existing and planned activities and use these as a platform to ensure Sefton's needs are met:

- InvestSefton delivers the current ERDF Place Marketing for Investment contract and also leads the LCR Investment board. The team supports new investment in Sefton through relationship management with developers, investors and existing major employers. This work is linked to LCR initiatives including the International Business Festival 2018 and Internationalisation.
- LCR Investment Board and place marketing which provides the inward investment proposition and activity across growth sectors needs to provide a platform to emphasise Sefton's unique assets
- Maximise Northern Powerhouse funding secured by LCR LEP to introduce Key Account Managers to work with Sefton's foreign owned businesses. Also, target resource to help continue building relationships with Sefton's major employers, investors and key decision makers to ensure the capture of new growth in the borough.
- 'Business Friendly Sefton' initiative which seeks to align Council business facing services with the economic strategy, with the aim of making the council 'easier to do business with' and 'treating businesses as valued corporate customers'.
- LCR Enterprise Executive Board and Sector Groups in place to develop key sectors



including manufacturing, energy and environment, Financial, Professional and Business Services, Digital and Creative, Life Sciences, Visitor Economy and SuperPort.

- Use of Memorandum of Understanding between strategic partners such as that being developed between Peel Ports and Sefton Council to help maximise local business and employment opportunities. This Collaboration Agreement covers Procurement of Local Goods and services, targeted recruitment and training, and integrated business support.

How will this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 4.43 InvestSefton work closely with Sefton@Work to draw attention to where employment opportunities are being created so Sefton@Work can endeavour to support investors with their recruitment needs and maximise the take-up of jobs by Sefton residents. This needs to be strengthened to ensure a line of connection between investments delivering jobs (opportunity) and targeting jobs to those of all ages who need them in the community. This requires a staged approach to planning, procurement and commissioning and a policy to support this.

4: Investing in education, skills and employability

- 4.44 Sefton's talent pool provides the means by which Sefton will secure economic growth and prosperity. Weaknesses in the current supply of labour are constraining Sefton's competitiveness, impacting on the ability of the borough to participate in higher value activity which tends to be characterised by a higher level of skill, enterprise and innovation. Businesses cite skill shortages and gaps as barriers to growth, and the anticipated scale of expansion and replacement demand in key opportunity sectors highlights the imperative for addressing these labour market deficiencies.
- 4.45 Sefton has a cohort of residents who are disconnected from the labour market, many of whom would like to work if they could, but face barriers to participation which put them at most risk of poverty and the negative consequences of economic shocks. There is a high prevalence of people of working age facing ill health and complex factors which have affected their capacity, skills and resilience, leaving many younger people and children being raised without exposure to positive working role models. Many residents are increasingly exposed to precarious forms of employment and can find themselves stuck in a low pay-no pay cycle where dependence upon welfare benefits continues for extended periods.
- 4.46 Sefton has a generally good level of education attainment and progression to HE, but there is a need to harness this capability and retain higher level skills and graduate talent. The



Sefton Economic Assessment identified a trend of underemployment, for example Sefton residents with graduate qualifications falling back into lower skilled/lower paid jobs which can displace those less qualified from their roles and constrain the potential of higher skilled individuals to drive productivity gains in the borough's economy.

- 4.47 Conversely, Sefton's business mix is such that there is less demand for higher-level skills than there could be, and this feeds back into resident labour force. A lack of opportunities for higher skilled jobs within Sefton may be a barrier to people aspiring to or seeking out the education and training to improve their skill levels.

Objective

- 4.48 Sefton needs to invest in its future talent pool to ensure young people get a good start in life and can access sustainable employment opportunities offering progression pathways to higher levels of pay and job satisfaction. Education-industry engagement needs to be facilitated to match the supply of skills to employer demands, and lifetime learning needs to be embraced to provide opportunities for reskilling and upskilling to meet changing skill needs.

Priority Actions

- 4.49 The types of action to pursue in this area include the following:
- The current system for careers and guidance for young people is recognised nationally as a weakness. Young people need to be inspired to make the right choices aligned to their interest areas and opportunities for employment. For example, key sector factsheets would showcase employment opportunities in Sefton and the LCR and provide a forward-facing perspective in anticipation of major projects and investments coming forward. Careers inspiration needs to begin at primary school and be embedded in the curriculum with active employer involvement. Sefton's young people need to be empowered to raise their aspirations and open their horizons to future opportunities and work should be undertaken in partnership with schools to ensure every young person has access to quality careers guidance provision that aims to maximize their potential
 - Facilitate a demand-led education system which responds to current and future employer needs and provides a quality education experience which inspires and entuses the workforce of the future. A quality post-16 education and training offer will help to retain learners in the borough and provide them with a clear progression pathway to higher education, training or employment. Opportunities to provide a specialised offer aligned to priority sectors, such as the Port Academy's service to the



maritime cluster, will provide a strong focus on business needs.

- Grow apprenticeship participation, recognising the barriers to participation by employers include business composition (sector and size) impacts on both the quantum of places available and the quality of the apprenticeship experience from a learner perspective. In addition to targeting young people, there needs to be focus on older workers at risk of redundancy due to the changing shape of skills need, which presents a reskilling requirement. Interventions such as Apprenticeship Ambassadors, supporting companies with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, access to AGE grants, and careers inspiration materials linked to key sectors of opportunities and vocational pathways will facilitate growth. Sefton Council's own successful apprenticeship scheme has provided many work placements and work experience opportunities, and can be an exemplar for other partners elsewhere.
- Supporting transition into adulthood in recognition that young people at Year 12 and 13 often struggle to transition successfully into employment. This action would align the practice derived from the Youth Employment Initiative, which has personalised budgets to help young people design their own pathway, with information advice and guidance provision which is currently contracted out to an external provider. This will provide young people with a clear line of sight from 16 to 19 year olds to facilitate a successful journey into employment, education and training.
- Sefton needs to support the retention of graduates within the borough and the LCR. Opportunities to work with employers to provide placements, internships, work experience and inspiration activity will develop the work readiness of graduates and help to embed them in local firms in roles which recognise their capabilities at an appropriate level.
- There needs to be a clear line of connection between investment delivering jobs within the borough, and a policy aimed at targeting jobs to those who need it. This requires internal procedures to be in place to enable a staged process to connect opportunity and need through the planning, procurement, and business support. Sefton needs to create an environment where recruitment of local 'talent' is the best and easiest solution for business.
- Sefton needs to be confident and clear in its intention to be the home of responsible businesses. It needs to work closely with investors to help them understand their corporate social responsibility to their staff and to the communities within which they are/hope to locate. This means being bold in its ask of employers to invest in their communities, for example through taking on apprentices, or working with the ILM project to provide valuable work experience and paid employment to unemployed



residents. Through providing a supportive business environment Sefton can help businesses to understand what ‘good’ looks like, helping businesses to grow and enable their investment in staff to provide more sustainable and better paying jobs.

- Sefton needs to proactively tackle the interlinked issues of poor health, employment and income which are driving deprivation in the borough. Support for health, households and work need to be triangulated to provide a holistic intervention which addresses the cause and effects of worklessness. Policy interventions such as the new Work and Health programme, Households into Work Pilot, Mental Health and Employment Task Group, and devolved funding at the city region level provides a platform for change in Sefton.
- Sefton needs to capitalise upon its track record of effective partnership delivery on employment and skills by continuing its work to support voluntary and community sector delivery, learning lessons from the experience of delivering programmes centering upon the congruence of public sector responsibilities such as Sefton Turnaround, support for parents through Early Help interventions, and the continued engagement with skills providers through Further Education, adult and family learning.

Delivery Tactics

4.50 The priority action areas will align with initiatives already underway, including:

- The recommendations of the Area Based Review for a single Sefton College. Merging four institutions through a two-stage process will help to shape the future curriculum to meet priorities for growth, higher level skills, and encourage greater specialisation. For example, the Port Academy Liverpool which offers specialised support to the maritime cluster. There will be a focus on growing Level 3 participation in support of skills for priority sectors including the visitor economy, engineering, IT and digital, and health and social care. A ‘Sefton offer’ is planned for higher education, providing local progression routes and increasing higher level skills in priority sectors, including development of higher level apprenticeships.
- Sefton@Work providing information, advice and guidance to Sefton residents aged 16+. Sefton@Work deliver the ESF ‘Ways to Work’ programme delivering employment advice, guidance, job preparation skills and paid work placements to workless residents. This includes a targeted ‘Youth Employment Initiative’ at those people under 29 years of age who have no work experience or little work history and provides access to a personalised budget to provide support in accessing training or employment. Through the Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programme Sefton Council can provide grants to employers to take on local unemployed people in a training capacity whilst paying them a real wage and gaining valuable work



experience. Other initiatives include the Sefton Turnaround project; Carers in Employment initiative; Leaving Care; Think Differently, Cope Differently; L30 Neighbourhood project.

- Sefton Apprenticeship Scheme, providing support to local employers to provide apprenticeship places, including grants.
- An external provider delivers a targeted careers information, advice and guidance and tracking service on behalf of Sefton and targets those young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.
- Targeted Post-14 activity aimed at those at most risk of exiting from education and training at a young age (NEET prevention). However budgetary pressures are making it difficult to execute statutory and non-statutory responsibilities.
- Sefton Community Learning Service has a strong emphasis on preparing individuals towards employment, working alongside Jobcentre Plus work coaches and Sefton@work to deliver employability programmes for their clients.
- The Households into Work Pilot will launch in 2017/18 for a two-year period and will test new ways of working with families and households across the LCR. This will build on other family-based initiatives such as Sefton Turnaround and the Child Poverty Pilot.
- Sefton Mental Health Group has a strong focus on the development of employment opportunities for people with mental health issues.
- As part of the Liverpool City Region Local Growth Deal with Government, the City Region have been awarded £3.05m across 2016/17 and 2017/18 to deliver a Skills for Growth programme of training support to businesses including independent and impartial advice through a Brokerage Service working across the Liverpool City Region.
- Sefton needs to ensure that the Local Growth Hub becomes a key focus for engaging businesses across the LCR Skills For Growth agenda.

How will this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 4.51 Inclusive growth principles are at the heart of these recommendations, with a focus on the skills and employability of Sefton's residents and facilitating a match between local labour supply and the demand for labour presented by local firms and future investment plans. Sefton will pursue a strong Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda with businesses and investors alike and encourage them to support growth and prosperity in Sefton.

5 Reconfiguring public services and community led delivery

- 5.1 With public sector organisations, including the Council, under significant pressure to find



new ways of delivering local services, there is both a need and an economic opportunity to stimulate the growth of new enterprises led by Sefton's communities.

Objective

- 5.2 To build a critical mass of self-sustaining community-led enterprises delivering services and running community assets in Sefton, which are creating jobs and bringing new social investment to the borough.

Priority Actions

- 5.3 **Identify assets for future community management and ownership:** Sefton can already point to good examples of its communities taking on responsibility for managing local assets. Action that starts by supporting communities to run such assets is a pathway to community ownership and enterprise, and the Council with other public sector organisations need to plan ahead for future assets to be transferred in this way.
- 5.4 **Build community capacity:** Lessons from elsewhere show that up-front investment to build the capacity of communities to form enterprises and run services is essential. Action should include supporting the capacity of groups and individuals to organise themselves to manage assets and form enterprises which might provide community services.
- 5.5 **Support the development and growth of new local community businesses:** Sefton Council and its partners will need to work with new social enterprises to ensure they have access to the ongoing advice, guidance and resources that enable them to operate sustainably in the long-term. Sefton Council is already seeking to support this sector through dedicated Business Advisers.
- 5.6 **Support the development of public enterprise and Council spin-outs:** Part of the process of public service reform is to generate new enterprise directly from the Council's activities.

Delivery Tactics

- 5.7 Steps are already being taken by Sefton Council and its partners including:
- Further embedding social value into Council planning, commissioning and procurement, and working with other public sector organisations to develop a consistent approach across the borough.
 - Continuing to support Enterprise Hub activities which are bringing together start up support and partner organisations including Community Trusts and which can assist in establishing social or community enterprises.
 - Identifying and where necessary supporting the process of securing social finance



for investment in new types of community enterprise. This might build on existing funds already operational or on developing the case for new funding bids.

- Working with organisations already active in Sefton and Merseyside (for example, Public Services Lab) to drive forward service reform and create opportunities for new social and community enterprise.
- Running pilot initiatives and then rolling them out where they have been successful.

How will this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 5.8 This action area is at the core of inclusive growth. Private-sector led job and business creation alone cannot provide the step-change in economic engagement that Sefton is aiming for. Enabling new types of enterprise to be formed and to succeed within the borough will help retain more of the benefits of growth for Sefton. It will enable the borough to become more economically resilient and self-reliant in the face of significant financial challenges.

6: Generating new sources of finance to support growth

- 5.9 Sefton Council, along with many public sector organisations, faces unprecedented financial challenges from the impacts of public sector spending constraints. This means that the Economic Strategy Framework will be delivered in a climate when the financial and personnel resources available to the Council and its partners are scarce. Developing new mechanisms to secure finance to reinvest in the borough, and creatively working with partners to lever in private and public sector investment are areas for action in their own right.

Objective

- 5.10 To generate new sources of income and external resources to invest in Sefton, and ensure that these resources are sustained in the long-term.

Priority Actions

- 5.11 The financial constraints Sefton Council and its partners are already operating under have triggered new thinking about how to generate investment resources. This has culminated in the production and adoption of a range of Investment Frameworks to cover key priority locations across the borough. The Council is also at an advanced stage to consider the establishment of a wholly owned Housing Development Company to drive forward development on Council owned sites. This is a good example of the type of action that should be pursued. Other types of action should include:



- 5.12 Exploring and developing new partnerships with the private sector: The Council has recognised that engagement and facilitation with the private sector will be central to delivering new development and regeneration in the borough. It will need to continue and extend this activity, identifying and then supporting preferred development partners for key sites, and potentially establishing joint ventures or other forms of investment mechanism to secure private sector investment alongside Council resources.
- 5.13 Higher value housing development at target locations: Sefton Council should ensure that a good proportion of new housing development is large sized (4 bedroom +) housing stock, a segment which Sefton's Economic Assessment is comparatively under-represented at present. Net increases generally in Sefton's housing supply should in turn increase receipts of Council Tax income, but increases in larger and higher value homes would be expected to generate higher revenues. However this also needs to be balanced with the need to provide affordable housing, for those households unable to access higher value market housing.
- 5.14 **Making more of existing assets, and investing in new Council owned commercial assets:** Additional sources of income for the Council could be generated by investing to improve existing commercial assets held by the Council (for example, business premises) where upgrading could yield higher levels of rental income.
- 5.15 Selective investment in larger commercial assets – including land and commercial property – also has the potential to create new income streams for reinvestment, or from the sale and development of land. The Council's financial investment strategy should identify both short and longer term opportunities for this type of asset investment.
- 5.16 **Strengthening its case making for external investment:** Sefton faces increased competition for European, national and city region level investment. This puts extra emphasis on the need to develop business cases for investment that are clearly identified as strategic priorities for the borough backed by compelling and robust evidence to justify funding.

Delivery Tactics

- 5.17 The emphasis is on Sefton Council and its partners to:
- Continue to explore how other local areas in the UK and perhaps overseas have been successful in creating and boosting their incomes through new investment.
 - Open-up new dialogue with developers and investors for specific sites and development schemes, and encourage new entrants into Sefton.
 - Push forward with new thinking about investment risk taking and its strategy for



generating sustainable new income streams in the long term.

- Further embed commercial thinking about its assets and development priorities into the Council so that it is integrated across its services and activities.

How will this action area contribute to inclusive growth?

- 5.18 Securing finance will be essential to delivering new development in Sefton and to regenerating its towns. Sefton Council and its partners are working more closely with the private sector to facilitate new investments. Better enabling the Council to generate its 'own' resources will increase the options available to it to pursue key regeneration priorities and to invest in supporting programmes which widen the economic opportunities available to its residents.
- 5.19 Success in this action area also has the potential to generate income to Sefton Council for re-investment in the wider range of public services to support Sefton's residents. There has been growing use by local authorities of returns generated from land and property development to feed general funds at a time when many are facing further real term reductions in core funding.

7: Repositioning and reprofiling Sefton

- 5.20 Sefton has been held back by external views of the borough and its towns that too often focus on the negative. It is not sufficiently recognised for its many strengths, and for what makes parts of the borough particularly attractive places in the Liverpool City Region. The social and economic challenges it has faced in the past 20-30 years have also negatively affected people who live and work in the borough. Restoring or encouraging a renewed sense of pride in the place was amongst the main themes of the Imagine Sefton 2030 initiative. Investment and action which delivers a new and improved product in Sefton must provide the springboard to reposition the borough and change external and internal perceptions of it.

Objective

- 5.21 To change internal and external perceptions of Sefton so that the borough's strengths, qualities and ambitions are increasingly recognised and there is a shift away from negative perceptions.

Priority Actions

- 5.22 The types of actions for this area identified in the Economic Strategy Framework cut



across several action areas described above, including those centred on development, regeneration and inward investment. New buildings, facilities and attractions, coupled with targeted improvements in Sefton’s public spaces will all help to change perceptions of the place.

- 5.23 Invest Sefton has already put in place a promotional strategy which targets inward investors and connects physical investment (sites and infrastructure) to business support and evidence about what makes the borough a good place to invest, work and live in. Efforts to reposition and reprofile Sefton will centre on this type of activity but could also include the following:
- 5.24 **Generating positive, profile raising material out of new development:** Sefton Council and its partners should seek opportunities to externally showcase new and innovative development and regeneration in the borough. This should focus particularly on Bootle and South Sefton. For example, modern and high quality canal-side housing development would be something new in Bootle and the chance to encourage people to think differently about the town.
- 5.25 **Establishing Sefton as an excellent place to do business:** Activity should focus on the way Sefton Council works positively with businesses and the services and support it provides with its partners. At the same time, Sefton should be confident about working with businesses to promote social value in their activities in the borough.
- 5.26 **Reposition Bootle as the northern gateway to Liverpool:** The major programme of commercial, leisure and housing development under way in North Liverpool, including the proposed development of a new dockside stadium for Everton FC, should be used as the opportunity to establish the town as Liverpool’s northern gateway. Coupled with the opportunity to redevelop central Bootle with the Council’s purchase of The Strand, the Council and its partners should make the most of the opportunities this will create to raise the town’s profile.
- 5.27 **Developing a new visitor economy strategy:** With Sefton’s visitor destinations already a key investment priority and with an active place marketing strategy, a new visitor economy strategy would give the opportunity to better mark out its attractions as a destination and its role in the wider visitor economy of the Liverpool City Region. The redevelopment of Liverpool’s northern docklands area, new investment in leisure attractions in Southport and improvements to facilities along Sefton’s coastline provide the platform. The borough could make more also of its established events programme and look to deliver new events.
- 5.28 **Secure national recognition for its approach to inclusive economic growth and regeneration:** Looking ahead, Sefton Council could aim to be winning awards for new



development and regeneration, enterprise and employability initiatives that will happen over the next few years.

- 5.29 **Clarify Sefton’s key strengths, assets and opportunities and distil this in to a clear and concise outbound message.** Build greater capacity and connectivity around assets and opportunities, connecting physical assets and hard infrastructure with soft infrastructure, R&D and Education.

Delivery Tactics

- 5.30 There is no need to reinvent the wheel in this action area. Sefton Council and its partners in the Liverpool City Region are already investing in activity and organisations whose functions include promoting the borough and widening its external appeal. This means:

- Collaborating with developers to exploit opportunities to highlight new development activity in the media and with investors outside the borough.
- Using the Council’s influence with public and private sector partners to ensure that the key messages about Sefton’s strengths and ambitions are consistently understood and used in their promotional activity.
- Working with the Liverpool City Region Destination Management Organisation to ensure Sefton is clearly positioned in the LCR’s visitor economy strategy and destination management plan.

How this area will contribute to inclusive growth

- 5.31 One of the key aims of this action is to help engage more of Sefton’s communities in its economic future. Although it is hard to measure, a borough which is bold about its future and the positive changes happening should see the impacts of this change filter through to its residents and businesses.
- 5.32 Successful action should see Sefton develop a stronger and more positive external profile, an outcome which will be integral to attracting new residents and new inward investment. Both will be key factors in the extent to which Sefton’s economic strategy delivers growth that improves the lives of its resident communities.



6 Measuring Success

- 6.1 It is important that Sefton's captures the change that results from the delivery of its new Economic Strategy Framework. Monitoring performance will help ensure that action and resources are directed where they deliver the maximum benefit, and that activity is adapted where performance measures point the need for a different course to be followed. Measures of success need to be clearly understood by Sefton's communities and businesses if the borough is to sustain commitment to its growth strategy over the next 10-15 years.
- 6.2 This section provides the first draft of a performance framework for the Economic Strategy. The principle is that it captures the full range of impacts of delivering in the action areas described above, combining quantitative and qualitative measures. Those highlighted in **bold** could provide the key measures for the framework.

Economic Measures

Table 6.1 Key Economic Indicators	
Indicator	What To Measure
Employment	Growth target - driven by Sefton employment forecast from Liverpool City Region?
Earnings	Increase in lower quartile workplace and resident earnings; increases in household income?
Economic Activity	Increase in economic activity rate and employment rates
Business Formation	Increase in number of new starts in Sefton and survival rate of new businesses over 1, 2, 3 years; include social/community enterprises; track change in different sectors
Business Growth	Increases in turnover and staffing of micro-businesses and SMEs
Inward Investment	Value of new inward investment in Sefton Growth in number of jobs created by new inward investment
Labour Supply	Growth in number of economically active, working age residents
Productivity	Potentially, use of change in local GVA but caution needed about reliability and value of this indicator
Skills	Increases in resident and workplace skill levels; increase in demand
Education	Higher attainment levels in schools and FE; increase in residents; Reduction in NEET
Training	Increases in number of apprentices/apprenticeships offered in Sefton; increases in number of residents in training; increases in number of training opportunities offered by employers



Visitors	Increases in value of visitor economy and volumes of visitors; increases in town centre footfall and retail/leisure spending in town centres
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6.3 In addition, measures relating to the volume and value of development in Sefton should be part of the impact framework. These measures include:

- Take up of housing and employment land (quantity)
- Change in the stock of housing and characteristics of new stock
- Change in commercial property supply (completions, deals)
- Change in the value of housing land and development values
- Change in commercial land values; change in sales and rental values.

6.4 Finally, indicators relating to improvements in Sefton's infrastructure should also be part of the performance framework. These could include:

- Improvements to congestion on key routes into and through Sefton. Time savings benefits can be translated into economic benefits.
- Increases in the use of public transport, walking and cycling, capturing modal change and recognising the wider social benefits of reducing car use.
- Number of businesses and residents connected to ultra-fast broadband; number of new starts of digital businesses from within Sefton.

Financial Measures

Indicator	Target
Council Tax income	Change in stock of higher Council Tax band properties; Increase in total Council Tax income generated;
Business rate income	Increases in business rate revenue generated in Sefton – rateable value of premises; total rate revenue generated
Sefton Council income	Increase in own resources generated by Council assets and new investments; increase in funding from external public sector sources
Public sector cost savings	Reductions in the cost of delivering core local services?
Investment yield	Capital growth from investments made?
Welfare costs	Reductions in costs of unemployment and other benefits in Sefton



Wider Social Value

Table 6.3 Measuring Social Value	
Indicator	What To Measure
Well being	Improvements in happiness and well-being of Sefton residents
Health	Improvements on range of indicators linked to economic
Local physical environment	Change in indicators including pride in community; quality of neighbourhood;
Financial inclusion	Measures of residents' financial well-being

Environmental

Table 6.4	
Indicator	What To Measure
Carbon emissions	Progress in reducing or limiting growth of carbon emissions by type of activity
Low carbon sector	Number of businesses in low carbon sector; workforce employed in low carbon sector





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